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IDENTIFIERS	*Virginia

ABSTRACT

This collection of graphs and text, part of a series describing the public colleges and universities in Virginia, are intended to answer the question, "What is it like to be a student at a public college or university in Virginia?" Most graphs provide data for fall 1995 and are broken down by individual four-year institution and the public two-year colleges as a group. Graphs provide data on: student populations at four-year institutions undergraduate, graduate, and professional; student populations at two-year institutions; residence of first-year undergraduates (on-campus vs. off-campus); residence of other undergraduates (on-campus vs. off-campus); most frequently chosen areas of study for each institution; undergraduate students in teacher education at four-year institutions; lower-division instruction by faculty type (regular, other, or graduate teaching assistants) based on organized-class student-credit hours; upper-division instruction by faculty type; graduate instruction by faculty type; instruction by faculty type (full- or part-time) at two-year public institutions; students enrolled in at least one course with fewer than 25 students--by student year; and bachelor's programs requiring an integrative experience for completion of degree. Also included are brief descriptions of special academic opportunities each institution offers its students. The final section lists questions students should ask as they choose a program and school. (DB)

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ED 417 657

Virginia Higher Education

Indicators

of Institutional Mission

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No. 3 1997 What do students experience?

State Council of Higher Education in Virginia

HE 031 113

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Indicators of Institutional Mission
No. 3: What do students experience?

This is the third in a set of publications describing the public colleges and universities in Virginia. The first publication answers the question, "Who enters?" It describes the entering freshman, transfer, and graduate classes; shows how many students progress from freshman to the sophomore year at each institution; and lays out the costs of attendance, how many students are awarded financial aid, and how much. The second publication — designed to address the question, "What do students learn?" — describes what each college or university knows about student learning in its programs and how it has used that information to improve. This third publication answers the question, "What is it like to be a student at a public college or university in Virginia?"

The first section, going beyond the demographic information provided in the first publication in this series, further describes the students at each institution. For the four-year institutions, this includes what proportion of students are undergraduates and what proportion are graduate students, as well as where the undergraduates live. At the two-year colleges, students may be enrolled in a transfer program, or they may be in either a two-year degree program or a one-year certificate program that will prepare them for a technical occupation. The many community-college students who take courses to improve specific skills or pursue their interests with no immediate plans to earn a degree are called "unclassified."

The next section describes the academic experience students have: what they study, who teaches students at each level, what special academic opportunities are available, what a student's chances are of being enrolled in a small class, and what the chances are of being in a program that requires students to integrate and apply what they have learned.

Pages 38-39 of this publication are designed to help prospective students choose an undergraduate or graduate program. It consists of the questions they might ask that could help them with that decision.

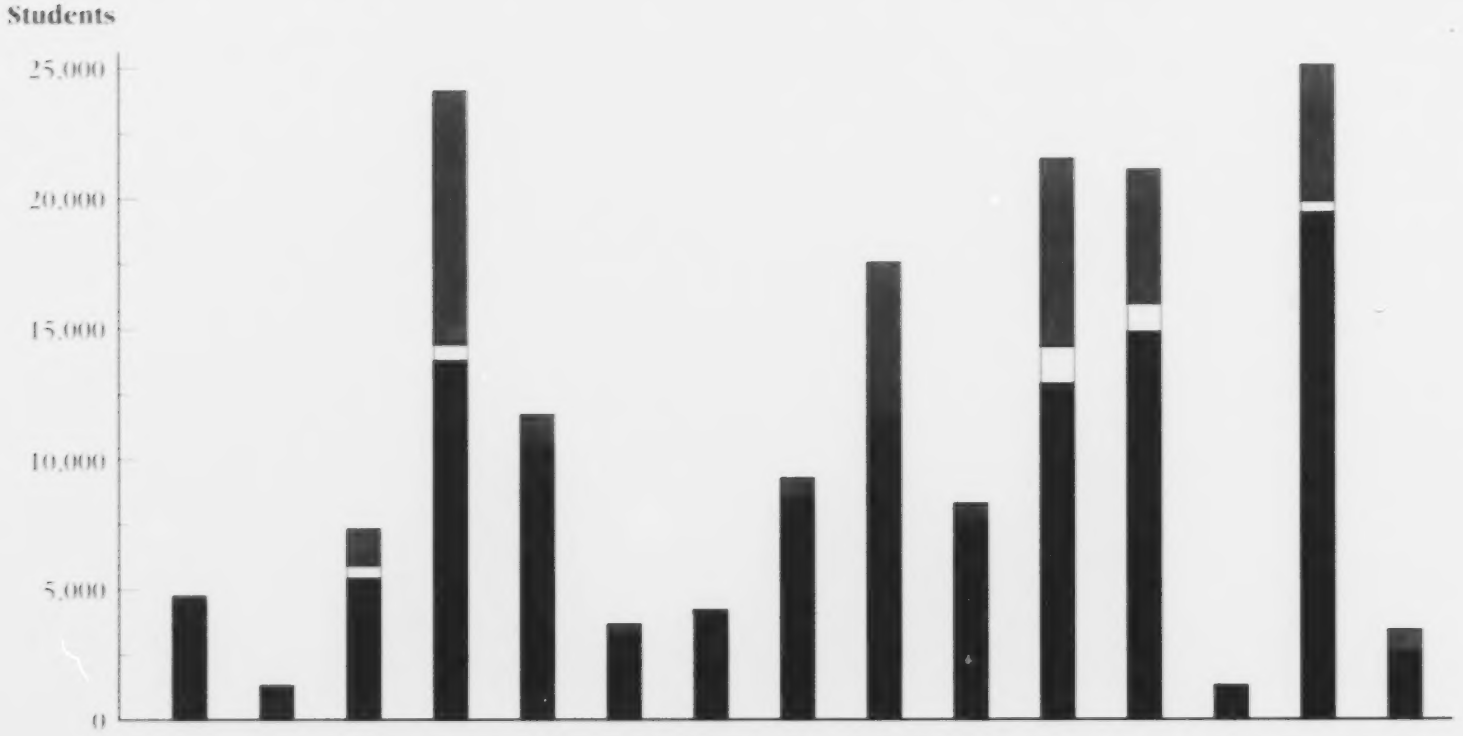
Who and where are the students?

Undergraduate, graduate, and professional students at four-year institutions

Students enrolled in certificate, diploma, or degree programs and unclassfied students at two-year institutions

Proportions of students living in campus housing

Student Populations at Four-Year Institutions
Undergraduate, Graduate, and Professional
Fall 1995



	CNU	CVC	CWM	GMU	JMU	LC	MWC	NSU	ODU	RU	UVA	VCU	VMI	VPISU	VSU
Undergraduate	4,406	1,412	5,480	13,774	10,965	3,001	3,690	7,131	11,463	7,707	13,108	14,532	1,196	19,498	3,158
Professional	0	0	522	698	0	0	0	0	0	0	1,703	1,136	0	317	0
Graduate	152	0	1,707	9,700	1,156	403	65	998	5,614	980	6,917	5,681	0	5,677	835
Total	4,558	1,412	7,709	24,172	12,121	3,404	3,755	8,129	17,077	8,687	21,728	21,349	1,196	25,492	3,993

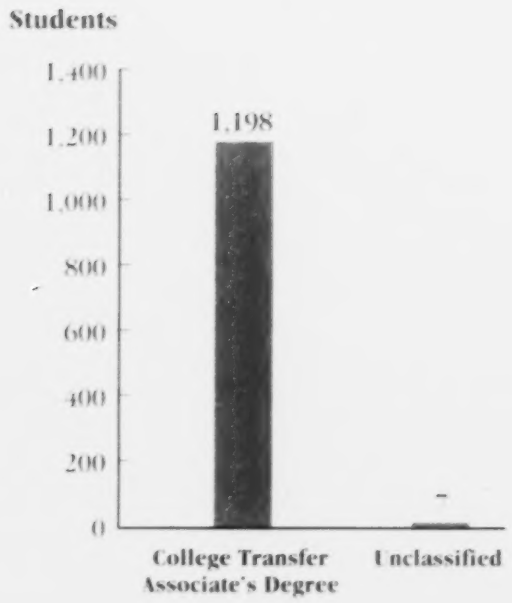
Source: 1995 SCHEV Fall Headcount Datafile

Student Populations at Two-Year Institutions

Fall 1995

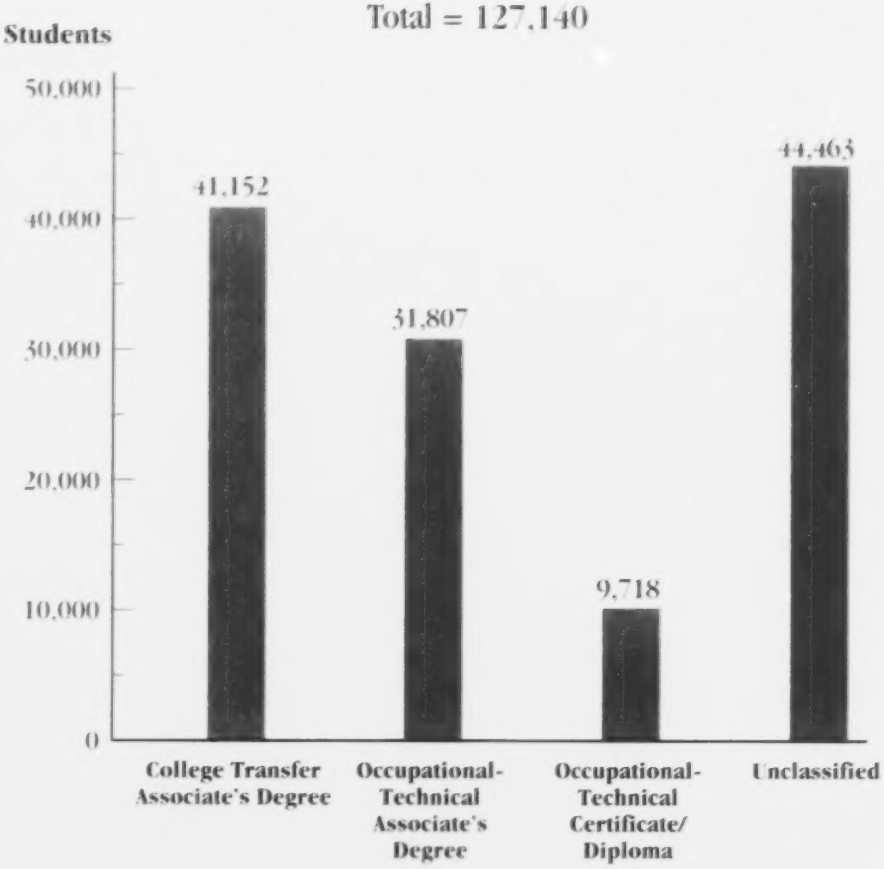
Richard Bland College

Total = 1,205

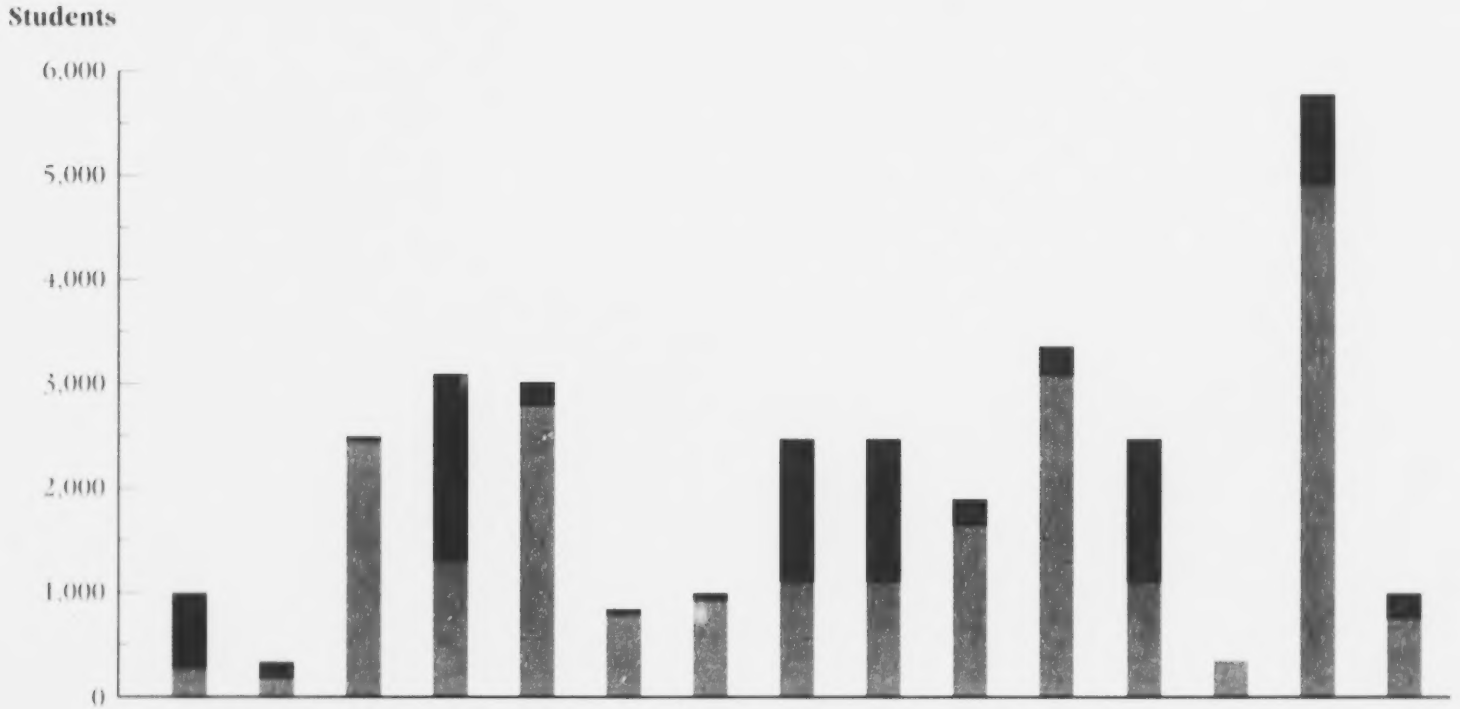


Virginia Community College System

Total = 127,140



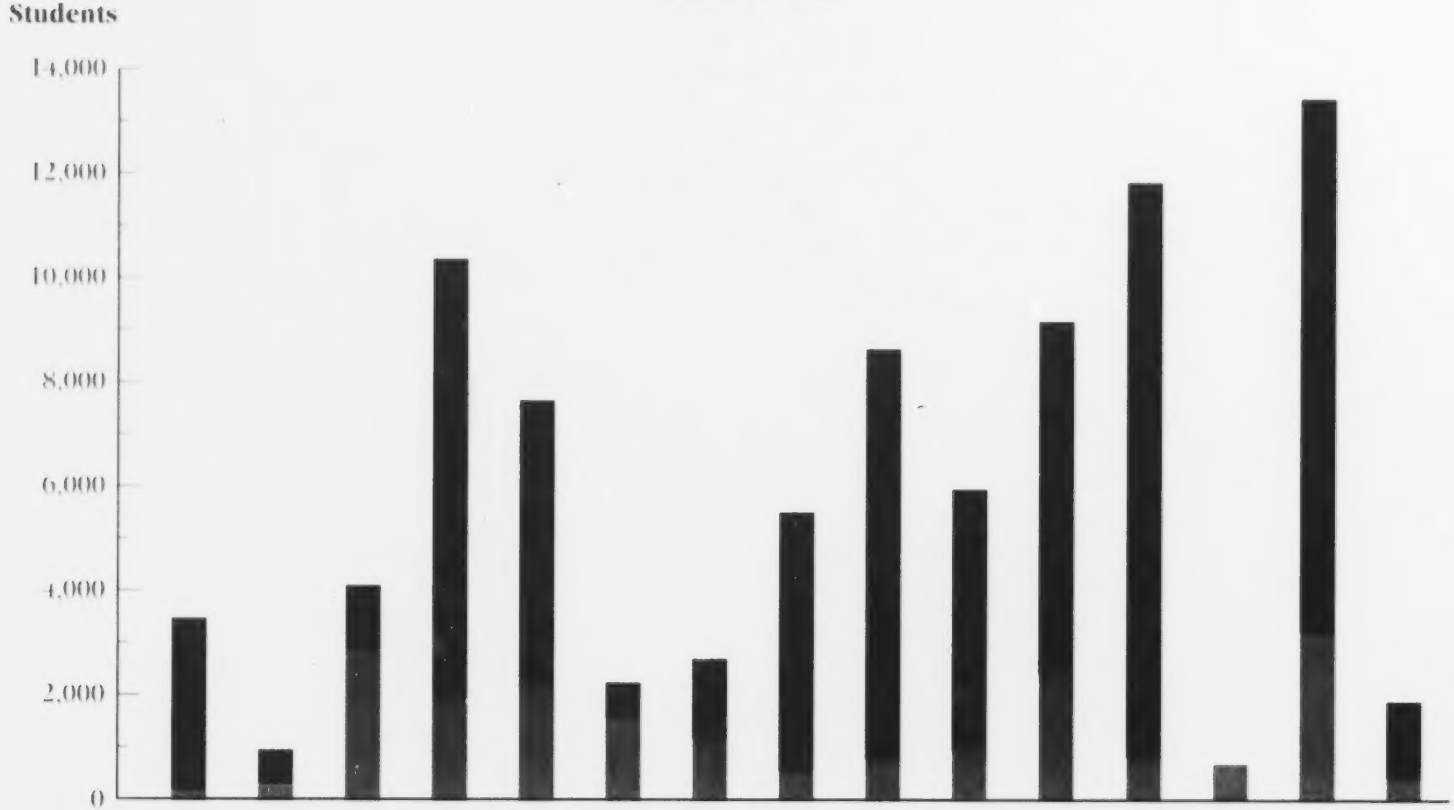
Residence of First-Year Undergraduates
(On-Campus vs. Off-Campus)
Fall 1995



	CNU	CVC	CWM	GMU	JMU	LC	MWC	NSU	ODU	RU	UVA	VCU	VMI	VPISU	VSU
On	223	158	1,376	1,295	2,808	741	833	1,036	1,043	1,512	3,122	1,068	379	4,963	799
Off	773	172	47	1,916	285	53	67	1,475	1,473	337	315	1,509	0	829	308

Source: 1995 SCHEV Fall Headcount Datafile

Residence of Other Undergraduates
(On-Campus vs. Off-Campus)
Fall 1995



	CNU	CVC	CWM	GMU	JMU	LC	MWC	NSU	ODU	RU	UVA	VCU	VMI	VPISU	VSU
On	77	209	2,787	1,144	2,182	1,589	1,226	583	777	1,020	2,604	858	817	3,205	558
Off	3,333	873	1,270	9,419	5,690	618	1,564	4,037	8,170	4,838	7,067	11,097	0	10,501	1,493

Source: 1995 SCHEV Fall Headcount Datafile

What are some aspects of the student academic experience?

- Most frequently chosen majors by program area
- Instruction of students by faculty type
- Special academic opportunities
- Percentage of students enrolling in a class with fewer than 25 students
- Percentage of programs requiring that students integrate and apply what they have learned

Most Frequently Chosen Majors by Program Area

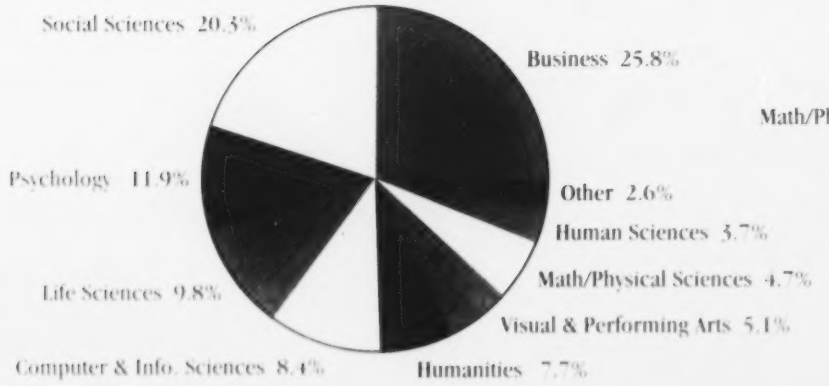
The following charts show the most frequently chosen areas of study at each institution, in order to show the academic focus of the campus. At some institutions, students declare their majors when they enter; at others, they do so at a later point. College catalogues or Web pages should be consulted for information about specific majors *(See page 40)*.

Teacher education is not generally an undergraduate major in Virginia. Instead, students study an academic subject and prepare to be teachers by taking a set of courses designed for that purpose. The number of students preparing to be teachers on each campus is displayed in a separate chart.

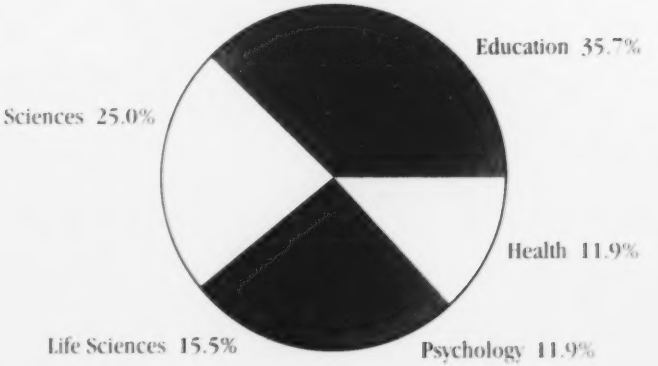
Most Frequently Chosen Areas of Study
Fall 1995

Christopher Newport University

Undergraduate

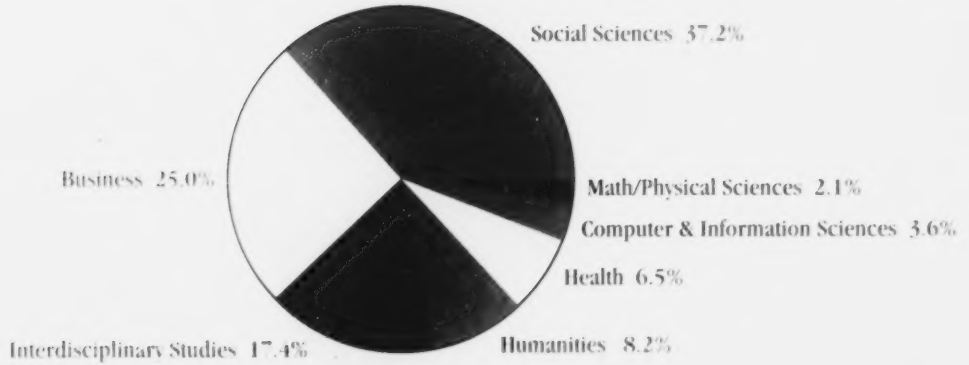


Graduate



Clinch Valley College

Undergraduate

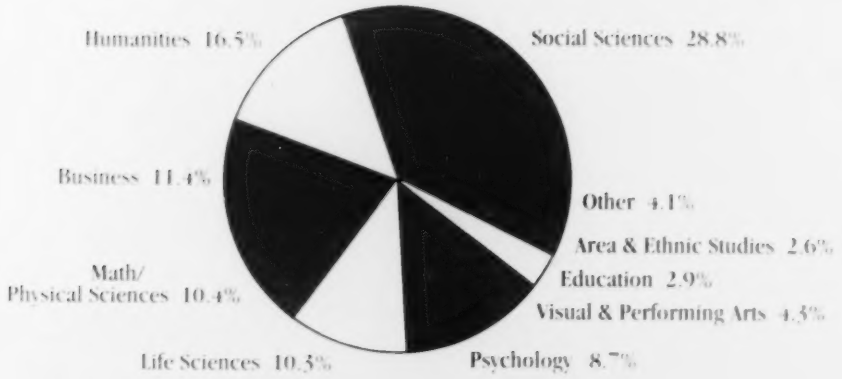


Source: 1995 SCHEV Fall Headcount Datafile. Percentages based on declared majors.

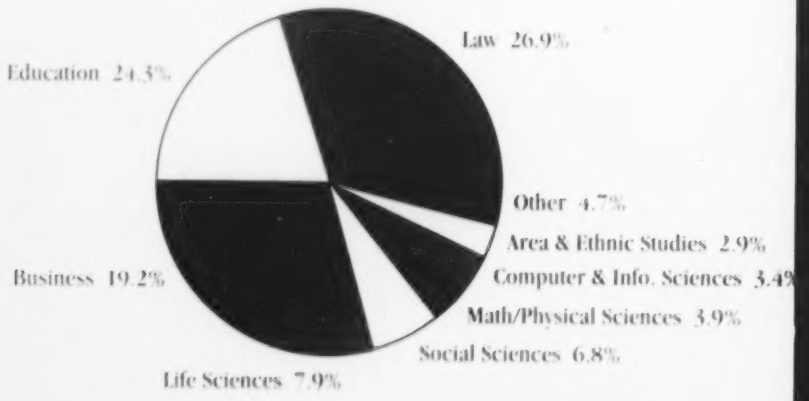
Most Frequently Chosen Areas of Study
Fall 1995

College of William and Mary

Undergraduate

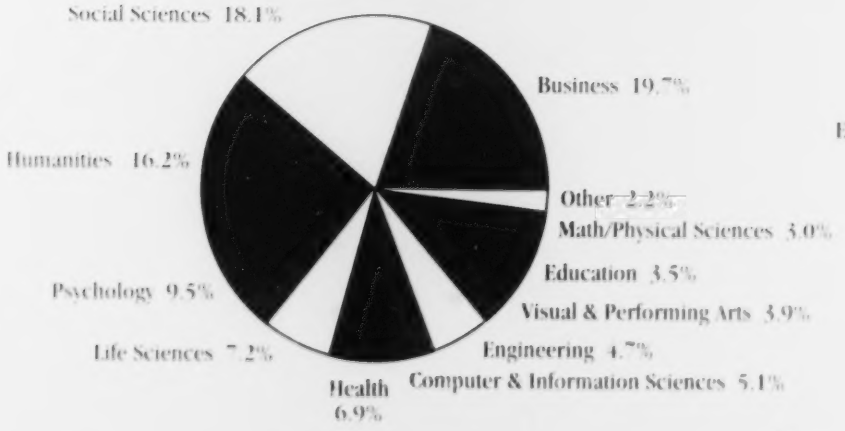


Graduate

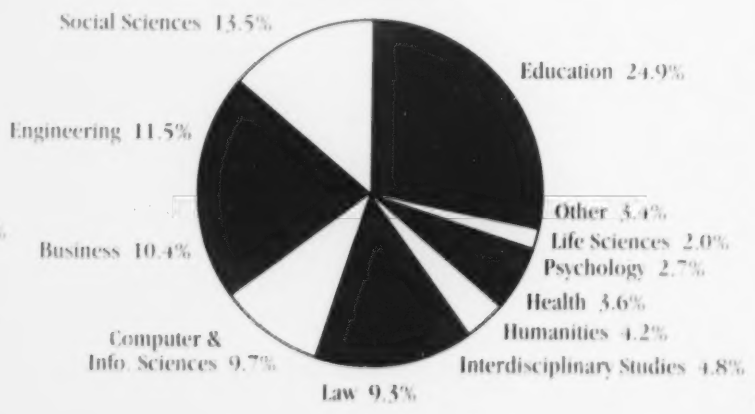


George Mason University

Undergraduate



Graduate

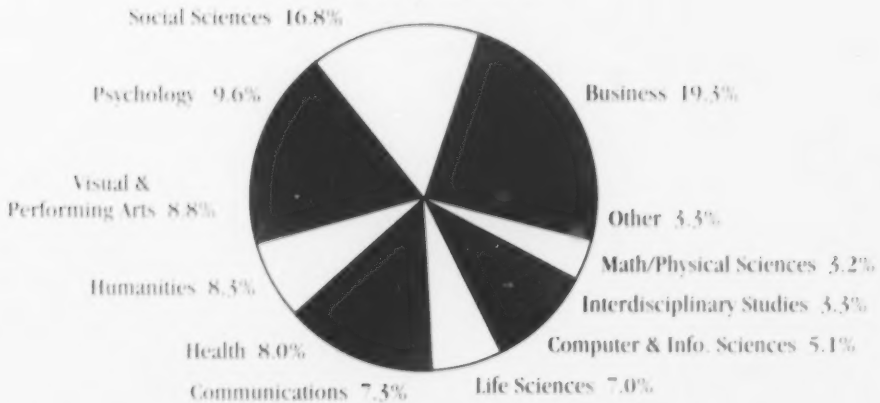


Source: 1995 SCHEV Fall Headcount Datafile. Percentages based on declared majors.

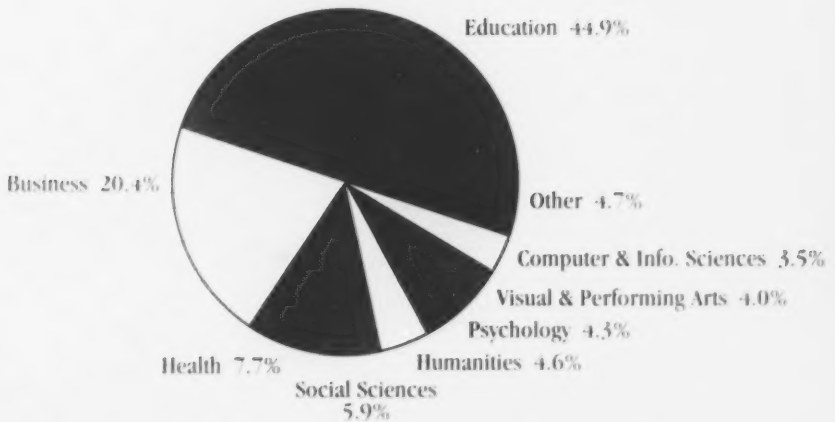
Most Frequently Chosen Areas of Study
Fall 1995

James Madison University

Undergraduate

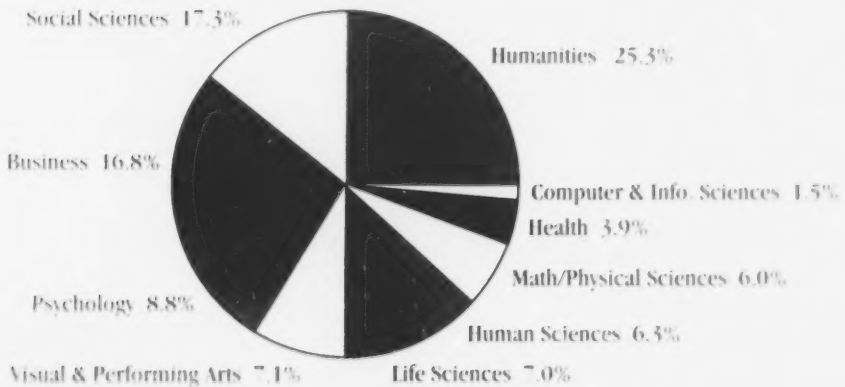


Graduate

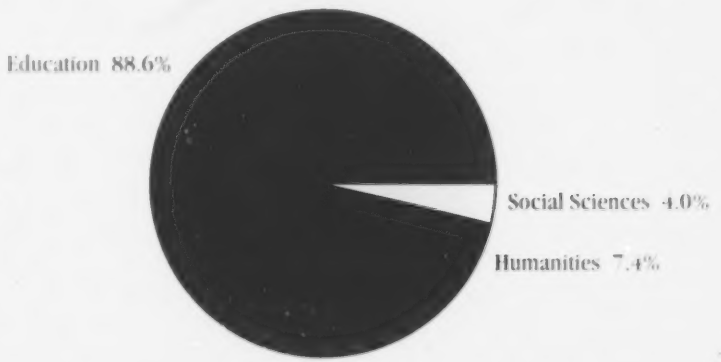


Longwood College

Undergraduate



Graduate

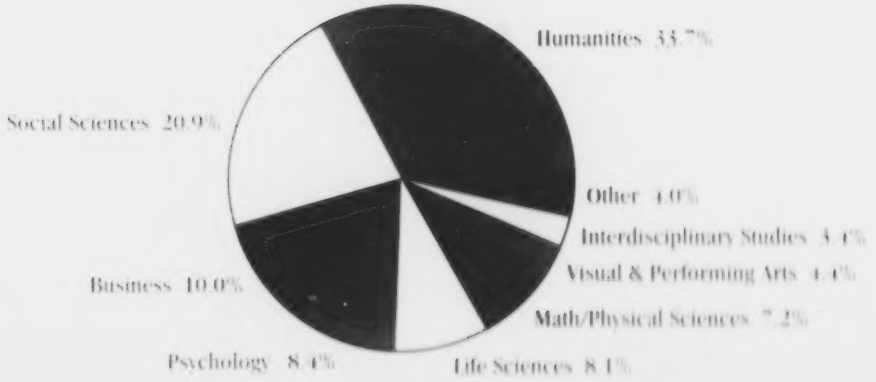


Source: 1995 SCHEV Fall Headcount Datafile. Percentages based on declared majors.

Most Frequently Chosen Areas of Study
Fall 1995

Mary Washington College

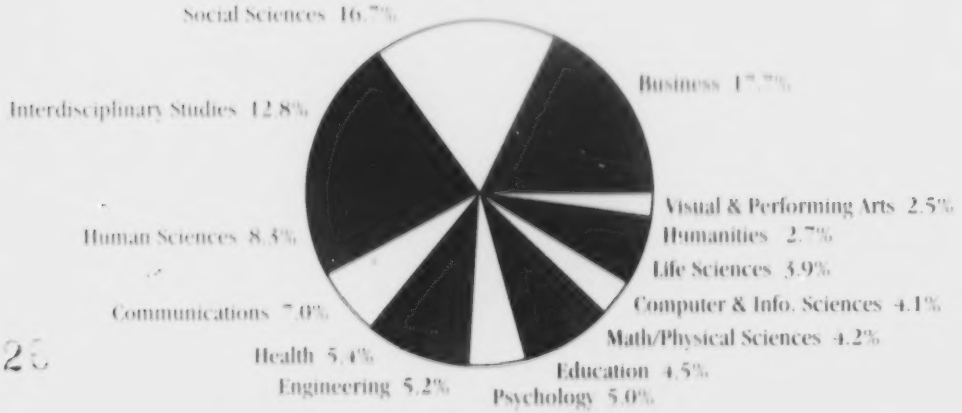
Undergraduate



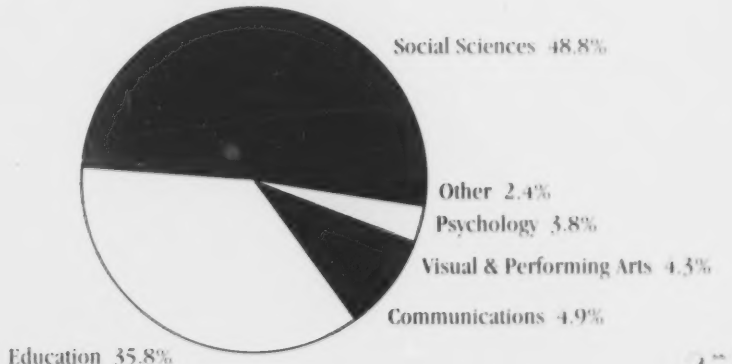
Graduate

Norfolk State University

Undergraduate



Graduate

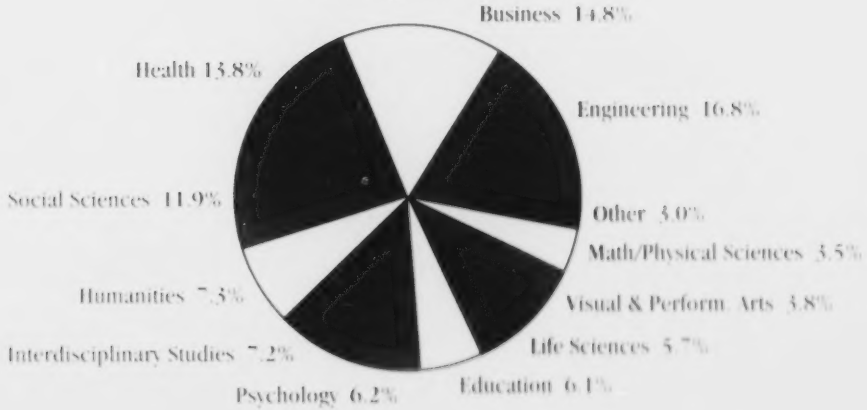


Source: 1995 SCHEV Fall Headcount Datafile. Percentages based on declared majors.

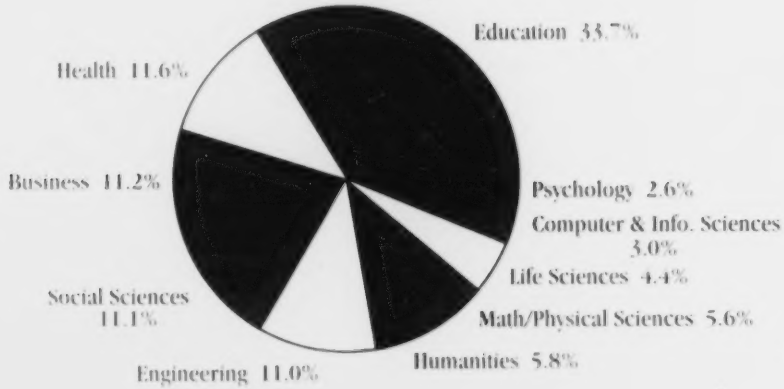
Most Frequently Chosen Areas of Study
Fall 1995

Old Dominion University

Undergraduate

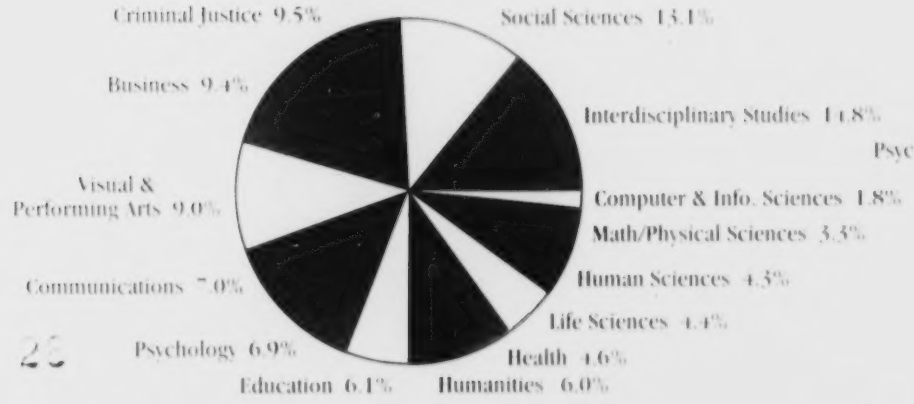


Graduate

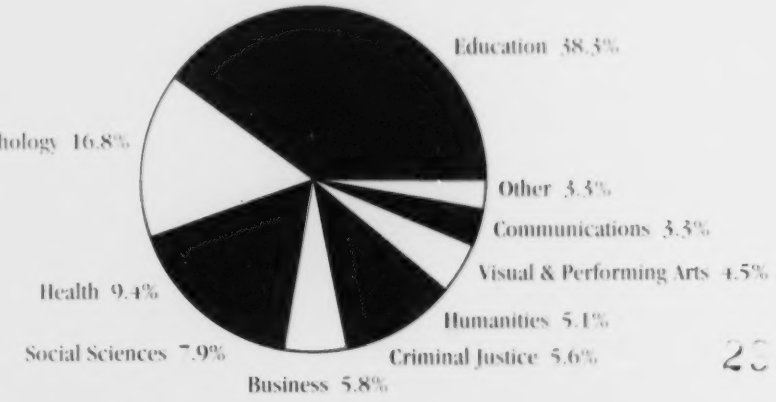


Radford University

Undergraduate



Graduate

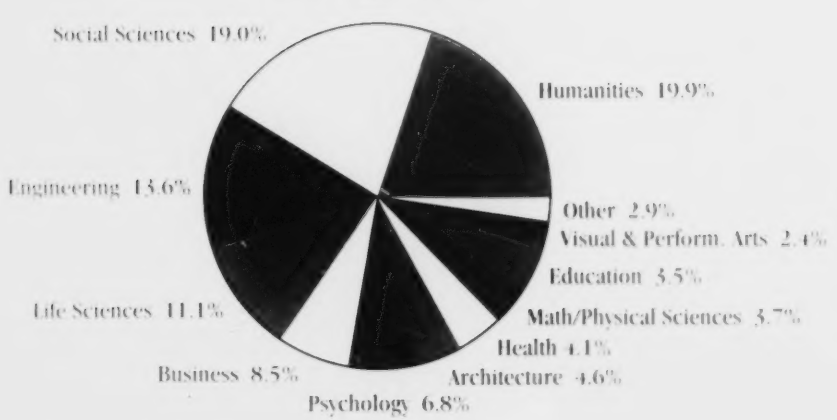


Source: 1995 SCHEV Fall Headcount Datafile. Percentages based on declared majors.

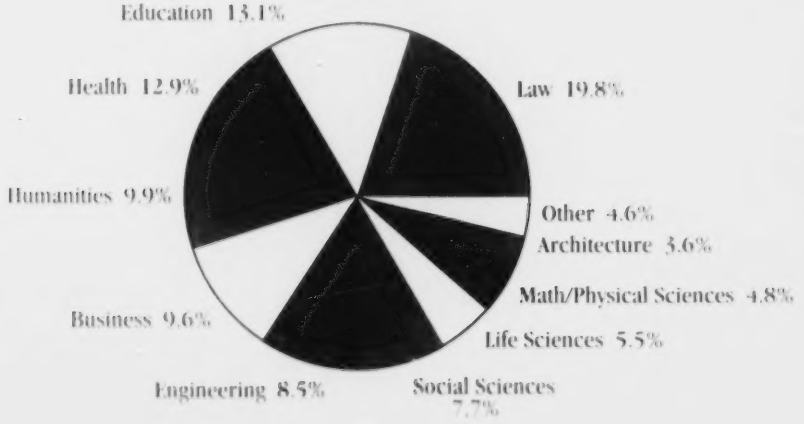
Most Frequently Chosen Areas of Study
Fall 1995

University of Virginia

Undergraduate

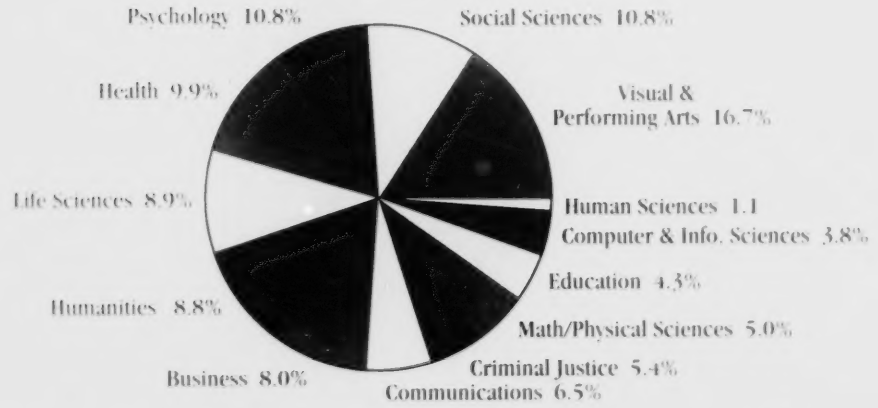


Graduate

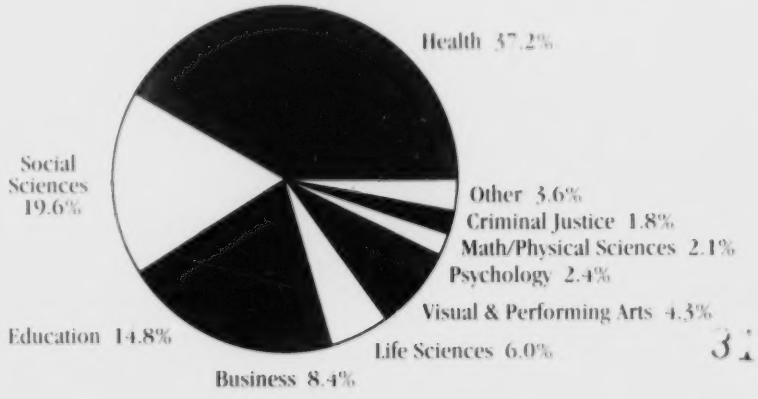


Virginia Commonwealth University

Undergraduate



Graduate

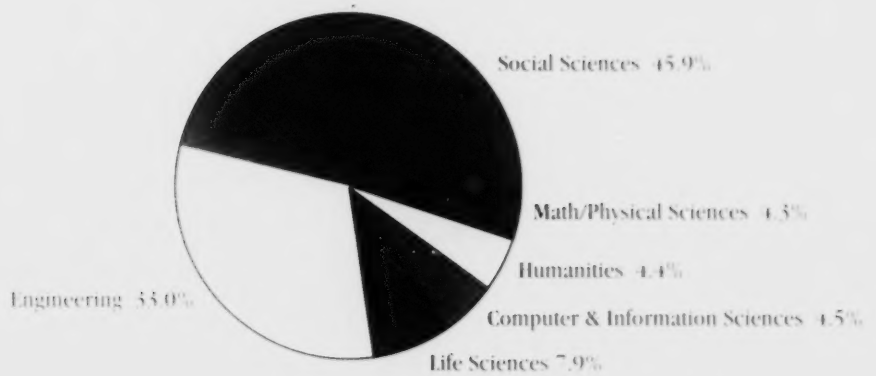


Source: 1995 SCHEV Fall Headcount Datafile. Percentages based on declared majors.

Most Frequently Chosen Areas of Study
Fall 1995

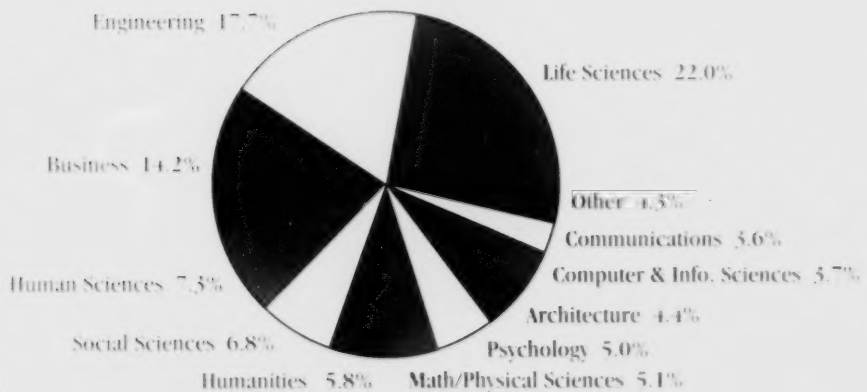
Virginia Military Institute

Undergraduate

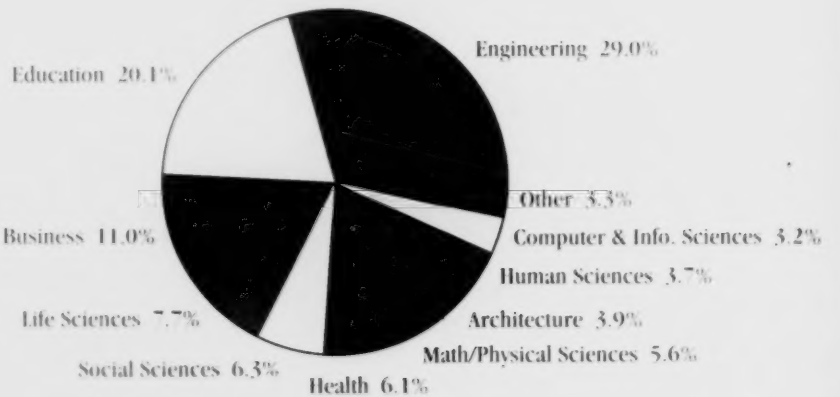


Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

Undergraduate



Graduate

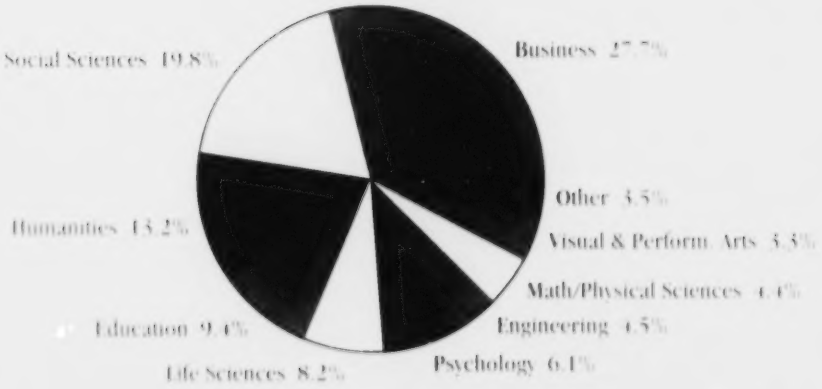


Source: 1995 SCHEV Fall Headcount Datafile. Percentages based on declared majors.

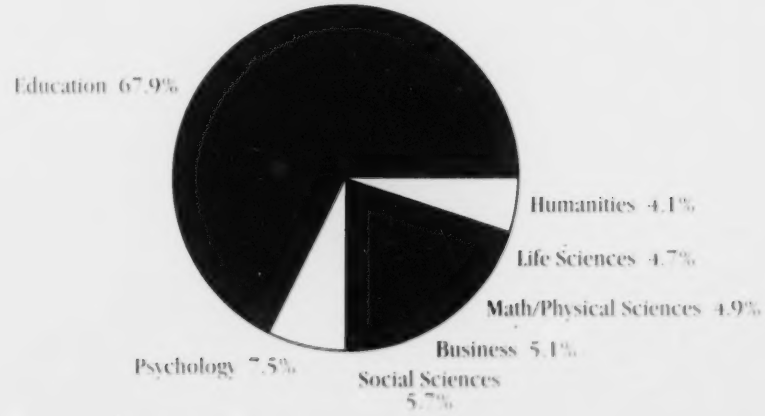
Most Frequently Chosen Areas of Study
Fall 1995

Virginia State University

Undergraduate

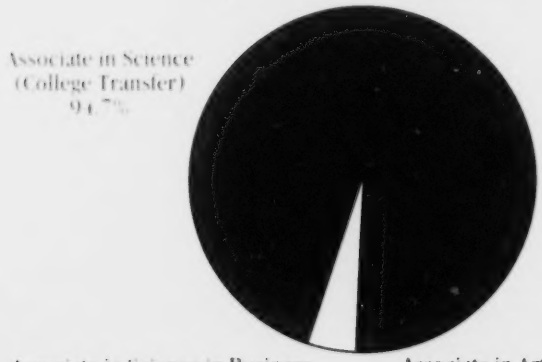


Graduate

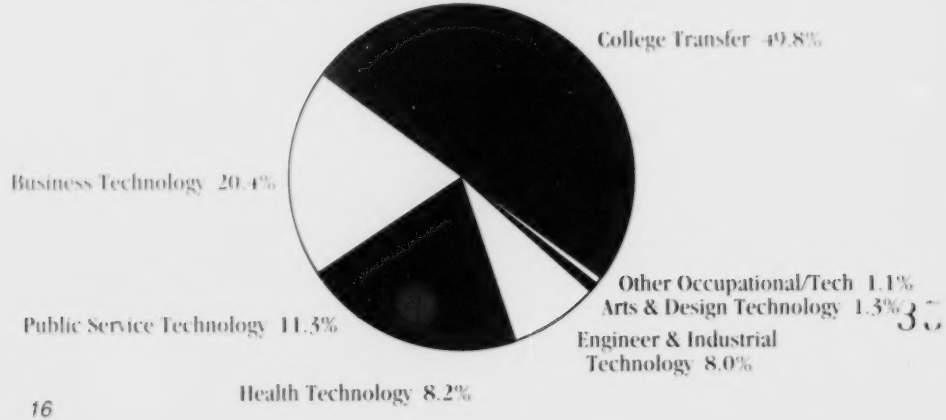


Public Two-Year Colleges

Richard Bland College


Associate in Science (College Transfer) 94.7%
Associate in Science in Business (College Transfer) 4.8%
Associate in Arts (College Transfer) 0.4%

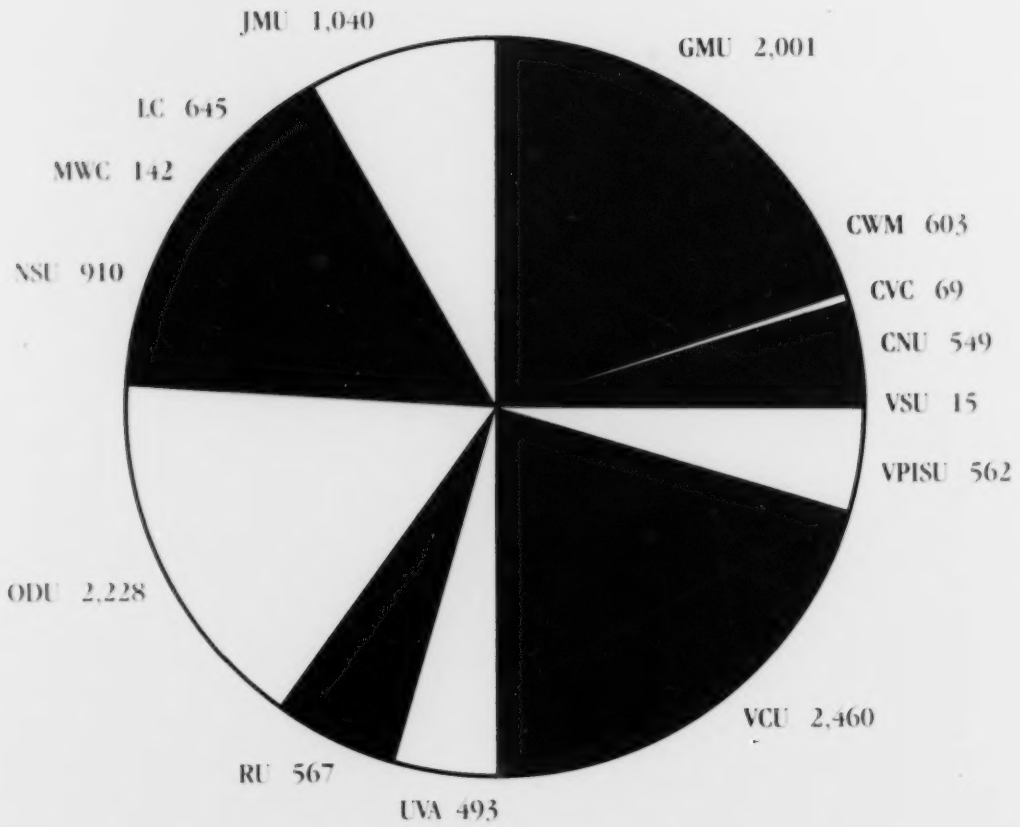
Virginia Community College System



Source: 1995 SCHEV Fall Headcount Datafile. Percentages based on declared majors.

Undergraduate Students in Teacher Education at Four-Year Institutions

Fall 1995



35

37

Source: 1995 SCHEV Fall Headcount Datafile. Percentages based on declared majors.

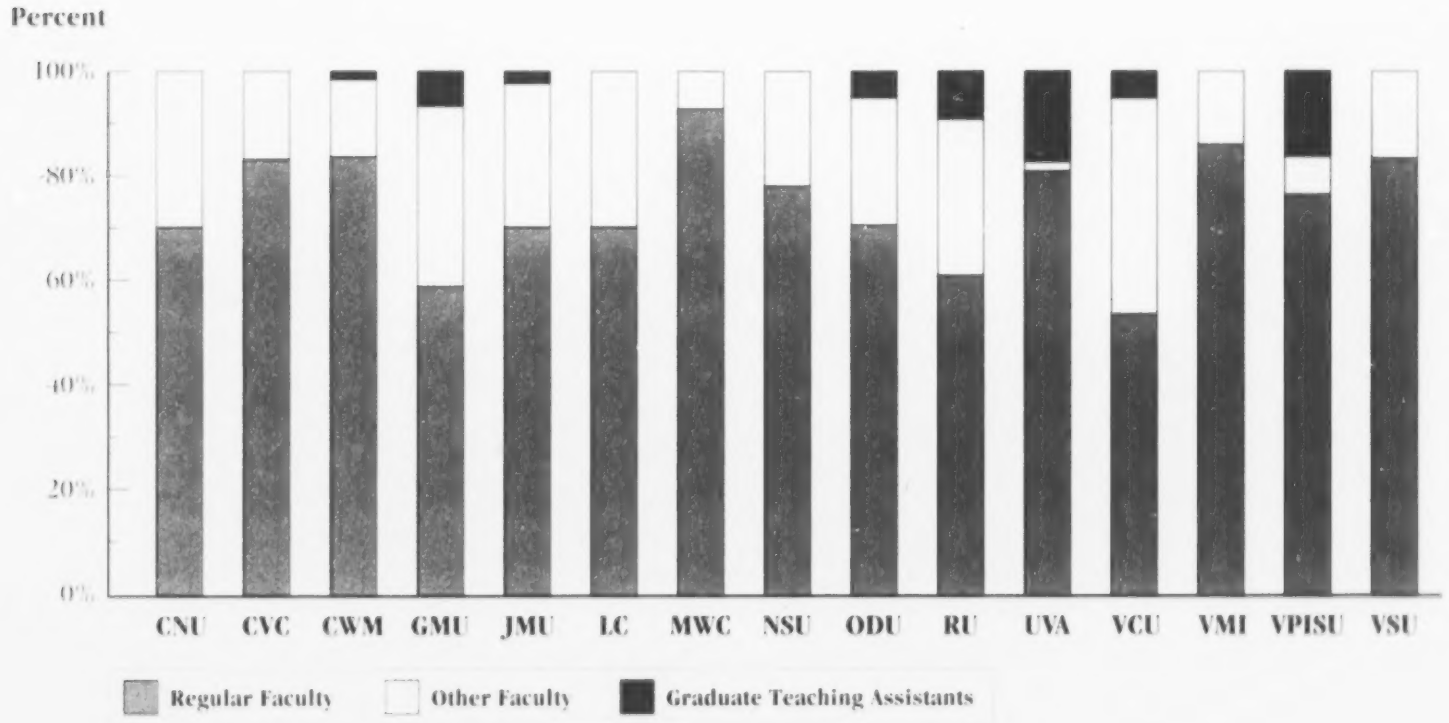
Instruction of Students by Faculty Type

The following four charts show the type of faculty who teach students at each institution. "Regular faculty" are full-time faculty with responsibilities for teaching, research, and service. "Other faculty" include administrators who have faculty appointments and teach some courses, visiting faculty from other institutions who teach at the institution full-time, part-time faculty, and professionals who share their expertise through occasional courses or full-time work over a limited period of time. "Graduate teaching assistants" are advanced graduate students who teach in their departments, typically under the direct guidance of faculty. They bring new knowledge and energy to the task while gaining valuable experience from it.

Lower-Division* Instruction by Faculty Type

Four-Year Public Institutions
Fall 1994

Based on organized-class student-credit hours



Source: Institutionally reported credit hours generated by faculty type

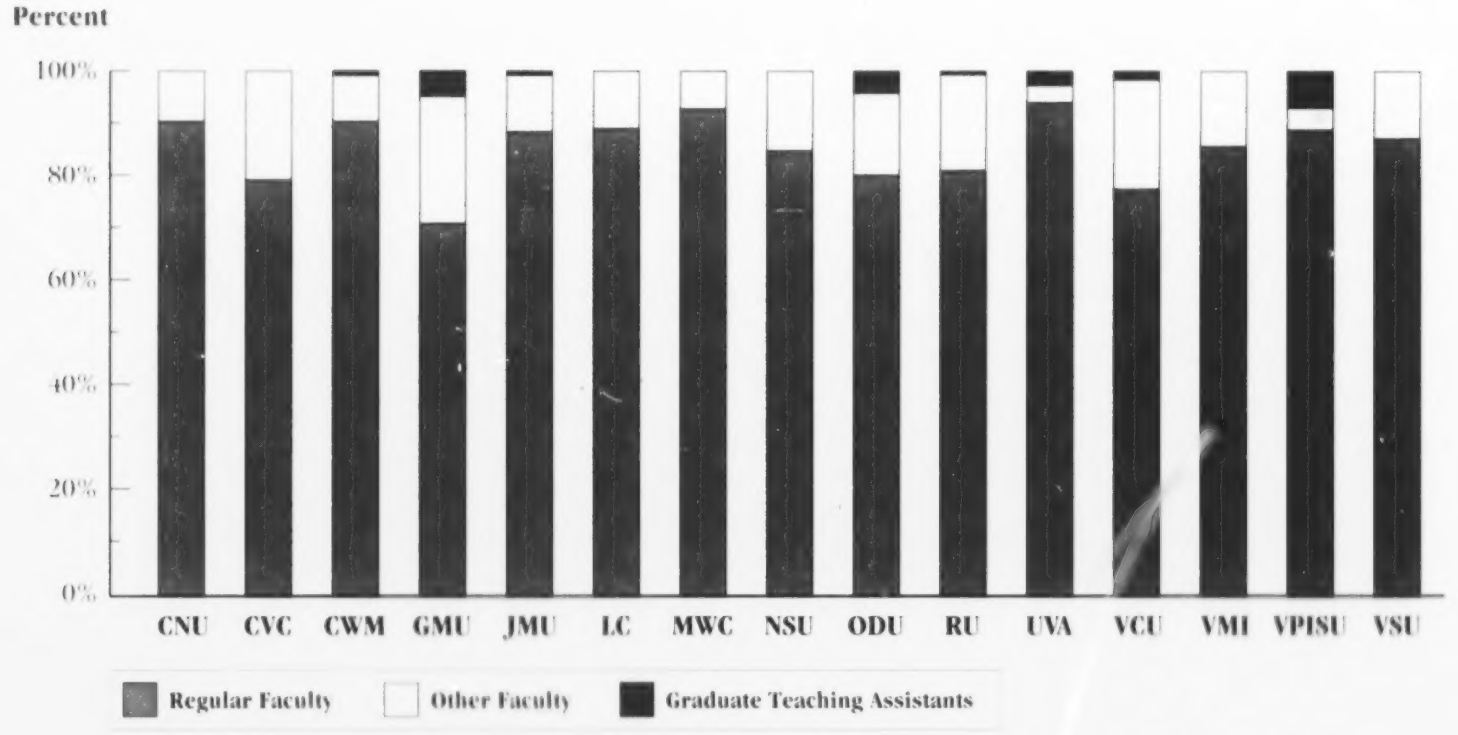
* Courses typically associated with the first and second years of college study

Methodology and definitions borrowed from Dr. Michael Middaugh's 1996 National Cost and Productivity Study, the University of Delaware

Upper-Division* Instruction by Faculty Type

Four-Year Public Institutions
Fall 1994

Based on organized-class student-credit hours



Source: Institutionally reported credit hours generated by faculty type

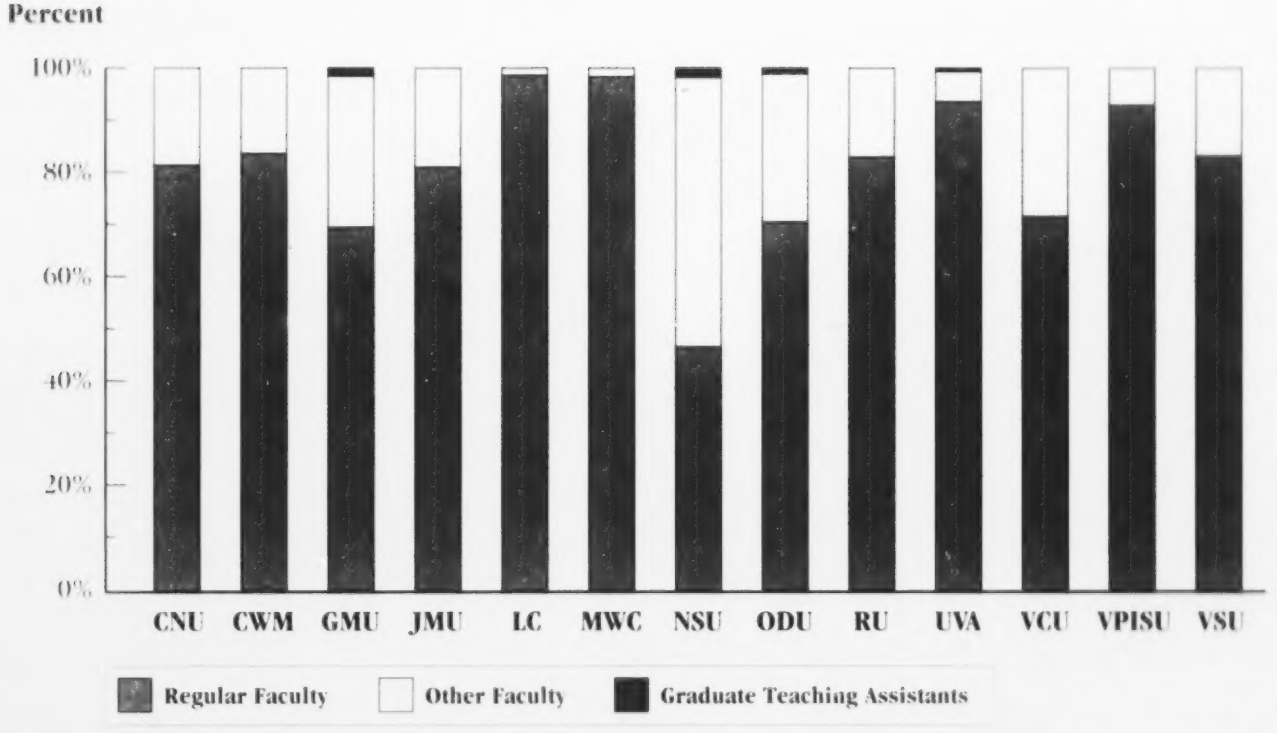
* Courses typically associated with the third and fourth years of college study.

Methodology and definitions borrowed from Dr. Michael Middaugh's 1996 National Cost and Productivity Study, the University of Delaware

Graduate Instruction by Faculty Type

Four-Year Public Institutions

Fall 1994



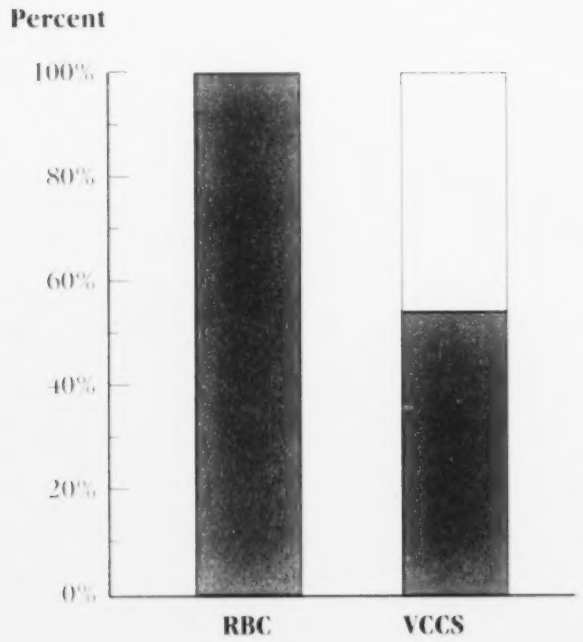
Source: Institutionally reported credit hours generated by faculty type

Methodology and definitions borrowed from Dr. Michael Middaugh's 1996 National Cost and Productivity Study, the University of Delaware

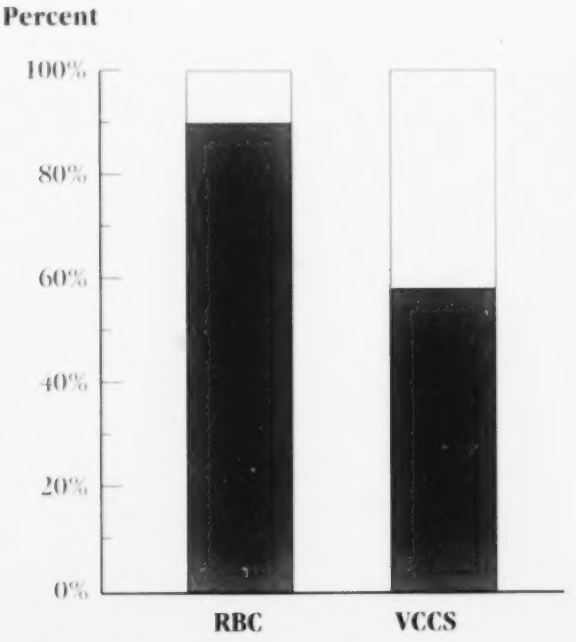
Instruction by Faculty Type

Two-Year Public Institutions
Fall 1994

Developmental/Foundation Courses



Lower Level Courses



Full-Time Part-Time

Source: Institutionally reported credit hours generated by faculty type

Methodology and definitions borrowed from Dr. Michael Middaugh's 1996 National Cost and Productivity Study, the University of Delaware

Description of Special Academic Opportunities

The following pages contain brief descriptions of a few of the special academic opportunities each institution offers its students. While all of the institutions provide many academic opportunities to their students, these are described because they are indicative of the institutions' efforts at promoting good practices in teaching and learning.

Special Academic Opportunities at Public Four-Year Institutions

Christopher Newport University

- The university has strong science programs with links to the Thomas Jefferson National Laboratory and NASA Langley Research Center. CNU offers master's degrees in applied physics and environmental science in addition to undergraduate degrees in computer science, math, physics, and biology. An undergraduate computer engineering degree was added in 1994.
- The criminal justice concentration of the Governmental Administration degree is linked to the Hampton Roads Regional Academy of Criminal Justice, an intergovernmental law enforcement training institute located on the campus.
- Programs in business and education have excellent placements for internships and student teaching. The accounting program is ranked in the national top twenty on the passing rate of first-time candidates taking the uniform CPA examination.

Clinch Valley College

- The college has expanded opportunities for students to take honors courses. There are honors versions of general-education courses, as well as interdisciplinary honors seminars.
- The college has five computer-resource centers in four buildings with full Internet access. Ninety percent of full-time faculty, students, and staff have computer accounts.
- New majors are being created. Majors in French, Spanish, and foreign studies have been initiated under the liberal arts and sciences degree program. Art and theater majors will be available in fall 1997. A major in administration of justice is being developed under the degree program in social sciences.

College of William and Mary

- The new general-education curriculum includes increased requirements in mathematics, science, and history; demonstrated proficiency in writing, foreign language, and computing; and a required freshman seminar enrolling no more than 15 students and emphasizing writing, critical thinking, and oral communication skills.
- Every concentration and major is developing a computing proficiency requirement designed to train all students to master the most sophisticated computing techniques used in their disciplines. The campus has a high-speed network and public access labs, and all rooms in the residence halls provide Internet access.
- Undergraduate research opportunities are provided at all levels of the curriculum. Summer funding supports about 250 students doing independent research projects.

Special Academic Opportunities at Public Four-Year Institutions (cont.)

George Mason University

- New Century College is an undergraduate B.A. or B.S. program that is more active, collaborative, interdisciplinary, and self-reflective than traditional degree programs. Students and faculty work together in small, interdisciplinary learning communities, and students have opportunities for internships, co-ops, service learning, and study abroad.
- GMU is developing a bioscience/biotechnology program for the Prince William campus in conjunction with the American Type Culture Collection.
- The master's program in New Professional Studies, a new model of professional education, enrolls teams of professionals (e.g., teachers or public administrators), who use theory to illuminate what happens on the job and their work experiences to modify the theory they learn in the classroom.

James Madison University

- Beginning fall 1997, JMU's new general-education program will offer a more coherent, rigorous, and interdisciplinary general education to students. Founded in specific learning objectives, it is designed to ensure that students acquire knowledge and skills that will form the foundation for study in the major and professional programs and for lifelong learning. The program will help students synthesize ideas, information, and theory, as well as understand how the concepts of one field can apply to others.
- The innovative new baccalaureate program in Integrated Science and Technology begins in the freshman year to educate students as decision-makers in scientific areas by emphasizing the integration of the sciences and scientific applications. Internships in the program have helped many seniors find jobs in private companies.
- Because of the link between academic experiences and entry into the work world, the Academic Advising Center and the Office of Career Services are collaborating to help students clarify their academic and career interests, values, and abilities. The partnership will better educate students about curriculum requirements and the skills needed for flexibility and success in specific careers.

Longwood College

- The college has several first-year programs intended to promote the close connection to the learning community that is at the heart of a Longwood education. "Preview" and "SAIL" are summer and early-fall on-campus orientations. These are followed by a required one-credit Longwood Seminar, which provides adjustment support and hones the academic skills necessary for a smooth transition to college life.
- Every student must complete a rigorous foundation program, usually during the first and second years of study. The general-education program is based on ten educational goals in areas including writing, mathematics, ethics, and our cultural heritage. Student achievement in those areas is assessed regularly, and the related courses are changed to ensure that the curriculum is as complete and relevant as possible for a twenty-first-century education.
- The master's in environmental studies integrates coursework in the sciences with business and the social sciences. It combines classroom study with a fieldwork experience designed to make graduates employable in environmentally related fields.

Special Academic Opportunities at Public Four-Year Institutions
(cont.)

Mary Washington College

- A new general-education curriculum, to be implemented in fall 1997, is designed to enhance students' abilities in oral and written communication, mathematics, and analytical thinking.
- Institutionally coordinated student volunteerism gives students the opportunity to provide services to the community in their areas of interest. In 1995-96, over 15 percent of the student body participated, contributing more than 16,000 hours of service.
- A successful institutional policy of self-determination in the residence halls gives students almost complete control over the rules governing conduct in their dormitories. While they must, of course, comply with federal and state laws, students have complete power to govern and police their own residence halls.

Norfolk State University

- The Dozoretz National Institute for Minorities in Applied Sciences (DNIMAS) is a scholarship program that addresses the severe shortage of minority scientists, preparing students for graduate studies and scientific occupations. DNIMAS scholars are afforded a three-week summer session for freshmen, research internships, microcomputers, field trips, career counseling, and seminars.
- The E.R. Strong School of Social Work offers baccalaureate, master's, and doctoral programs in social work. The school integrates theory and practice, as students participate with faculty in research and community-service projects.
- The Center for Materials Research provides students with the opportunity to participate in research in the following fields: laser spectroscopy, nuclear magnetic resonance, crystal growth, analytical chemistry, environmental chemistry, strong interaction physics, electron spin resonance, and X-ray diffraction. This gives graduates a significant career advantage.

Old Dominion University

- The Career Advantage Program provides a guaranteed practicum, internship, or cooperative-education experience for credit in all majors, thereby linking the curriculum, career advising, and work experience. State-of-the-art computer technology is used to support career guidance, resume preparation, job searches, and referrals for all kinds of positions.
- The university implemented learning communities and supplemental instruction in fall 1996 to improve students' performance and retention. In a learning community, students enroll in a cluster of courses in which course work is integrated under the guidance of a lead faculty member. Supplemental instruction enhances learning in targeted courses by supplementing classroom instruction with out-of-class structured study led by trained peer mentors.
- ODU encourages the use of instructional technology to facilitate learning by awarding grants to faculty innovators and upgrading classrooms. These upgrades make available to instructors and students high-tech tools and multimedia capabilities

Special Academic Opportunities at Public Four-Year Institutions (cont.)

Radford University

- Radford offers new freshmen and new transfer students a one-credit elective (University 100, Introduction to Higher Education) that focuses on issues related to academic success and social transition. The course is team-taught by a faculty member and an upper-class peer instructor.
- In a program called Students on the Road to Success, the university provides counseling and tutoring to freshmen and transfer students whose grade-point average makes them subject to academic suspension. The program is designed to increase persistence and graduation rates.
- The Business Assistance Center serves as an economic development outreach service and provides hands-on learning opportunities for students through student consulting projects, internships, international market planning projects, and international market research done using databases housed in the center.

University of Virginia

- University seminars for first- and second-year students are given by prominent faculty in all departments on subject areas in their specialties, with enrollment limited to fewer than 15 students. Other unusual academic offerings are courses offered in technology enhanced classrooms and structured interdisciplinary programs that allow students to focus on areas such as women's studies, bioethics, modern media studies, political and social thought, and others that cross disciplinary boundaries.
- The Distinguished Major Program and the B.A. with Honors Program allow students of special ability and interest to pursue a course of independent study under faculty guidance in their third or fourth year, with their research papers evaluated by a departmental committee or by visiting examiners from other colleges and universities.
- Two residential colleges house close to 800 students. Students, resident faculty, and participating non-resident faculty fellows are brought into frequent contact outside the classroom in dining, short courses, and other social/academic interactions.

Virginia Commonwealth University

- A new general-education program begins in fall 1997, with learning objectives for all undergraduate students in written and oral communication, critical thinking, ethics, quantitative analysis, science and technology, humanities, social sciences, and the arts.
- Students have expanded opportunities to contribute to the community through volunteer activities, structured mentoring programs, and service-learning courses in the undergraduate curriculum.
- The University Honors Program includes honors courses, intensive special-topic honors "modules," extensive brown-bag lectures and discussion groups, and guaranteed admission to the medical school and various advanced professional and graduate programs for honors students who qualify.

Special Academic Opportunities at Public Four-Year Institutions (cont.)

Virginia Military Institute

- VMI has established a writing center which is open in the evenings and on Saturday mornings to assist cadets with their writing.
- VMI is expanding its language offerings to include introductory and intermediate courses in Japanese and Arabic, as well as courses in Japanese and Islamic culture. VMI is also pursuing private funding to provide additional international study programs and internships.
- A total of 50 to 75 network connections will be installed in a study room in the barracks as an initial step in providing network access to cadets in their rooms.

Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

- Cyberschool adapts more than 30 traditional arts, sciences, and humanities courses to take advantage of the newest technology — the Web, CD-ROM, e-mail, etc. A major portion of each Cyberschool course is "on-line" and outside the usual classroom mode. The Electronic Thesis and Dissertation Project uses computer technology to make graduate research rapidly available to other researchers and to expand students' knowledge of desktop publishing and digital libraries.
- The Biological Sciences Initiative integrates life-science curricula offered by five colleges to meet student demand for high-quality programs. The initiative has enhanced students' programs by establishing an introductory curriculum common to all life-science majors, by expanding research opportunities for undergraduates, and through extensive use of instructional technologies using the best knowledge available on how people learn.
- "Green" engineering seeks to improve environmental quality locally and globally by ensuring that every engineering graduate from Virginia Tech is fully aware of environmental issues and understands the environmental consequences of engineering systems. Courses in green engineering — for example, "Energy, Resource Development, and the Environment" — are accessible to all students, including those in environmental science and environmental policy studies.

Virginia State University

- The Institute for Leadership Development provides structured experiences for selected undergraduate students that prepare them to assume leadership roles in both the public and private sectors. The program provides local and national internships.
- The Inter-Generational Mentoring Program assists students in adjusting to the rigors of academic study and college life through tutoring and mentoring services provided by retired faculty members.
- The Honors Program offers a series of cultural events and activities throughout the academic year. The Honors Cultural Series features guest lecturers and artists; events are free and open to the public.

Special Academic Opportunities at Public Two-Year Institutions (cont.)

Richard Bland College

- Richard Bland College is the only public institution in Virginia whose primary mission is to provide a core curriculum in the arts and sciences designed for transfer to upper-level colleges and universities within the Commonwealth.
- As a part of The College of William and Mary, Richard Bland guarantees its graduates with at least a 3.0 grade-point average admission into William and Mary to complete their undergraduate education. The college also has articulation agreements that guarantee admission into twelve other state-supported and five private institutions in Virginia.
- Richard Bland College has a micro-computer laboratory for physics in which computer-assisted and simulated experiments and activities provide a visual and interactive learning environment.

Virginia Community College System

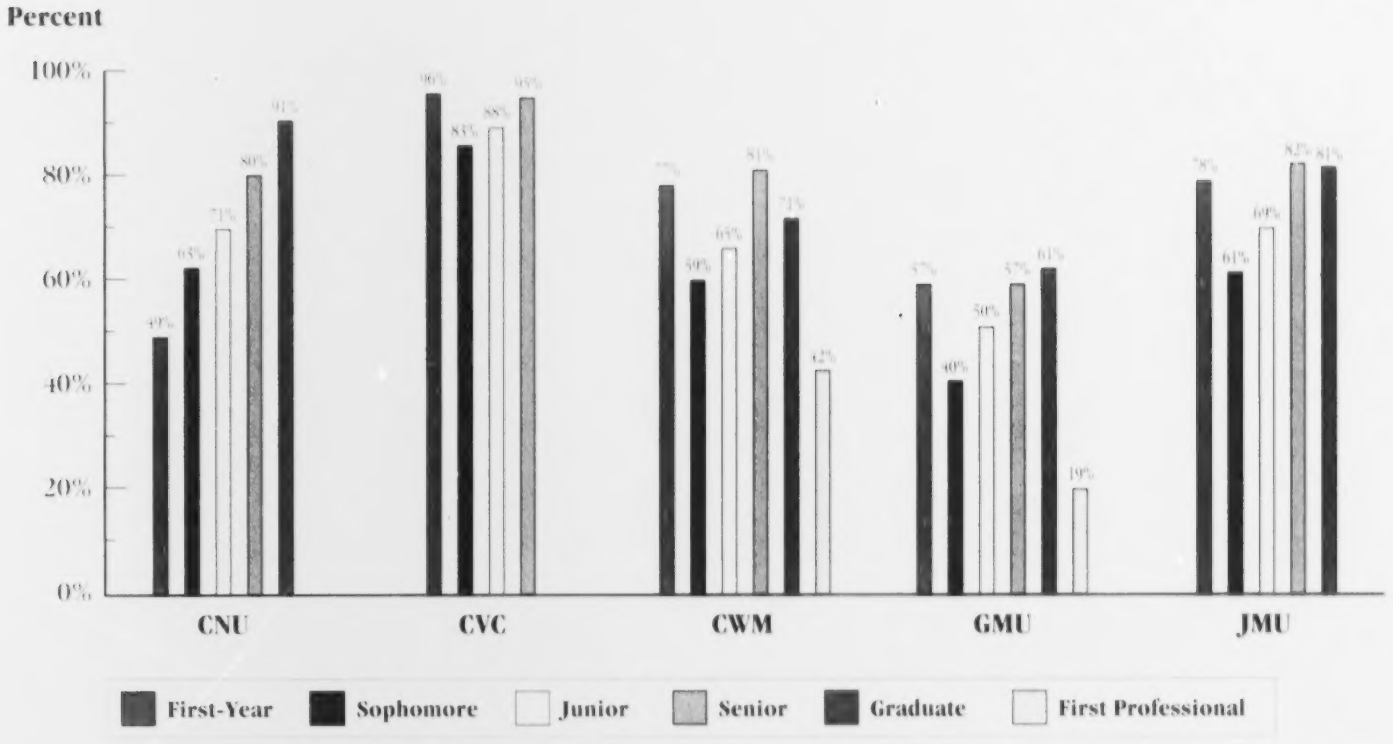
- Acting on the "community" in "community college," several campuses have established service learning as a central commitment. Faculty, staff, and students at one college have established a "philosophy camp" and taught and tutored in local schools. Through the investment of time in these and other projects, students and the college become integral to the community.
- New approaches to orientation of beginning students are being tried. One college structures its program to meet the needs of a diverse, largely part-time student body that may not apply in advance to the college. Important information, counseling, placement testing, and a college-success skills course are availablefor beginning students.
- Students planning to continue their education at a four-year institution might want to enroll in the honors programs offered on many campuses. Honors courses provide an academic challenge beyond ordinary course expectations by allowing motivated students to learn more independently, profit from lively discussions, and pursue interests outside the traditional course material. Honors faculty intensify the classroom experience by using alternatives to the lecture mode and encouraging students to work independently and with each other and to question and challenge what they are taught.

Percentage of Students Enrolling in a Class with Fewer than 25 Students

To give a sense of the classroom experience students at each level are likely to have, the following charts show the percentage of students at each level who enrolled in at least one class with fewer than 25 students. Courses that grant only one or two credits — such as many designed to help students become acquainted with college or a discipline, most science labs, or short courses — are not included in the charts. Since first-year students often require personalized attention but introductory courses tend to have larger enrollments than more specialized upper-level courses, most institutions have made concerted efforts to provide small first-year classes. Some other ways institutions provide that attention include independent study and directed research, recitation sections, laboratory session, tutoring, counseling, and e-mail communication.

Students Enrolled in at Least One Course with Fewer than 25 Students

Fall 1995

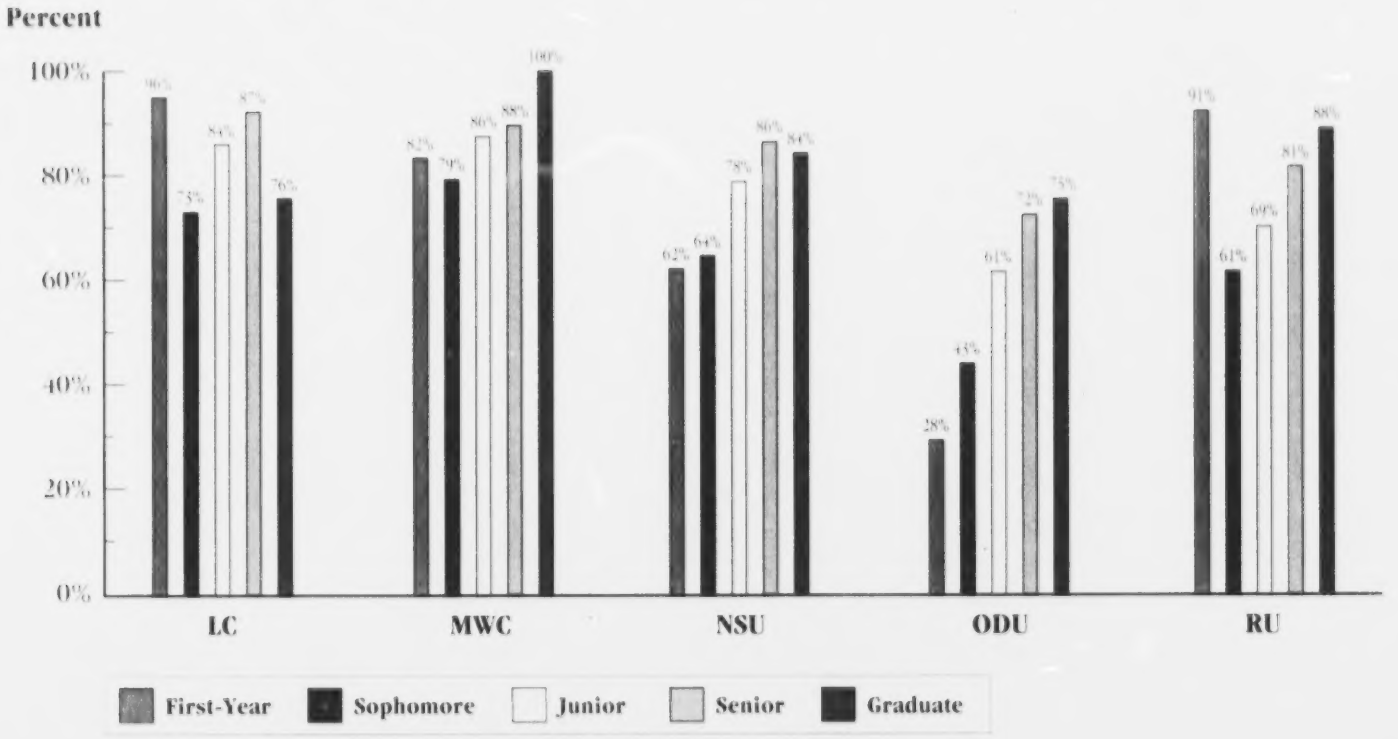


Includes Courses Awarding Three or More Credits

Source: 1995-96 SCHEV Annual Course Enrollment Datafile

Students Enrolled in at Least One Course with Fewer than 25 Students

Fall 1995



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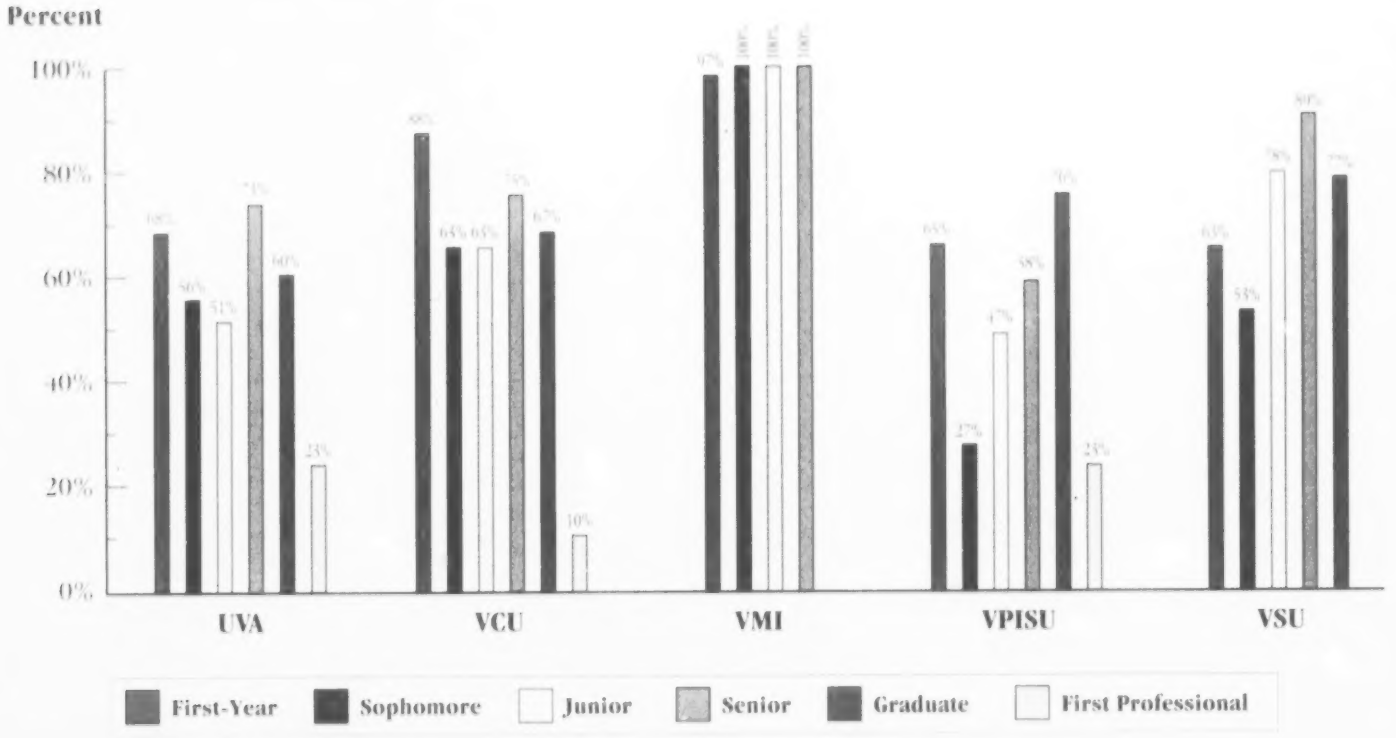

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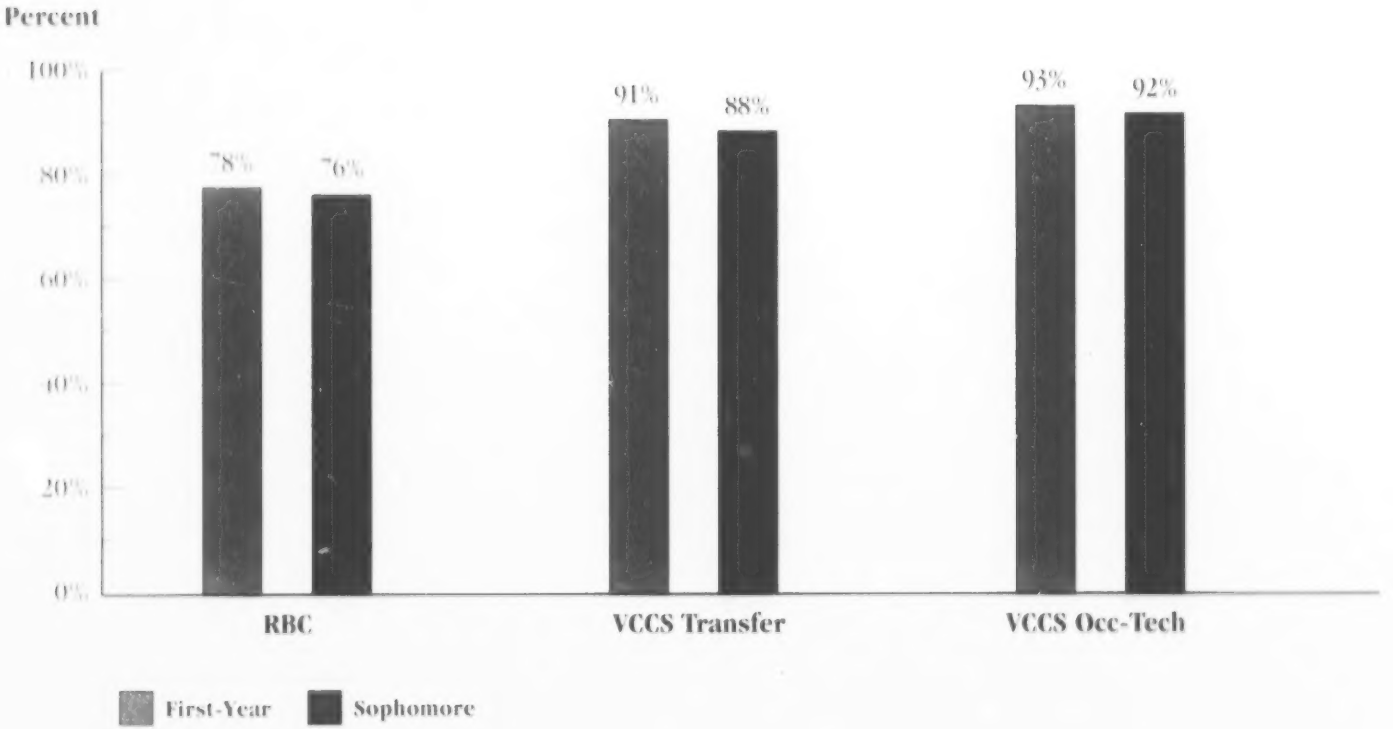


Includes Courses Awarding Three or More Credits

Source: 1995-96 SCHEV Annual Course Enrollment Datafile

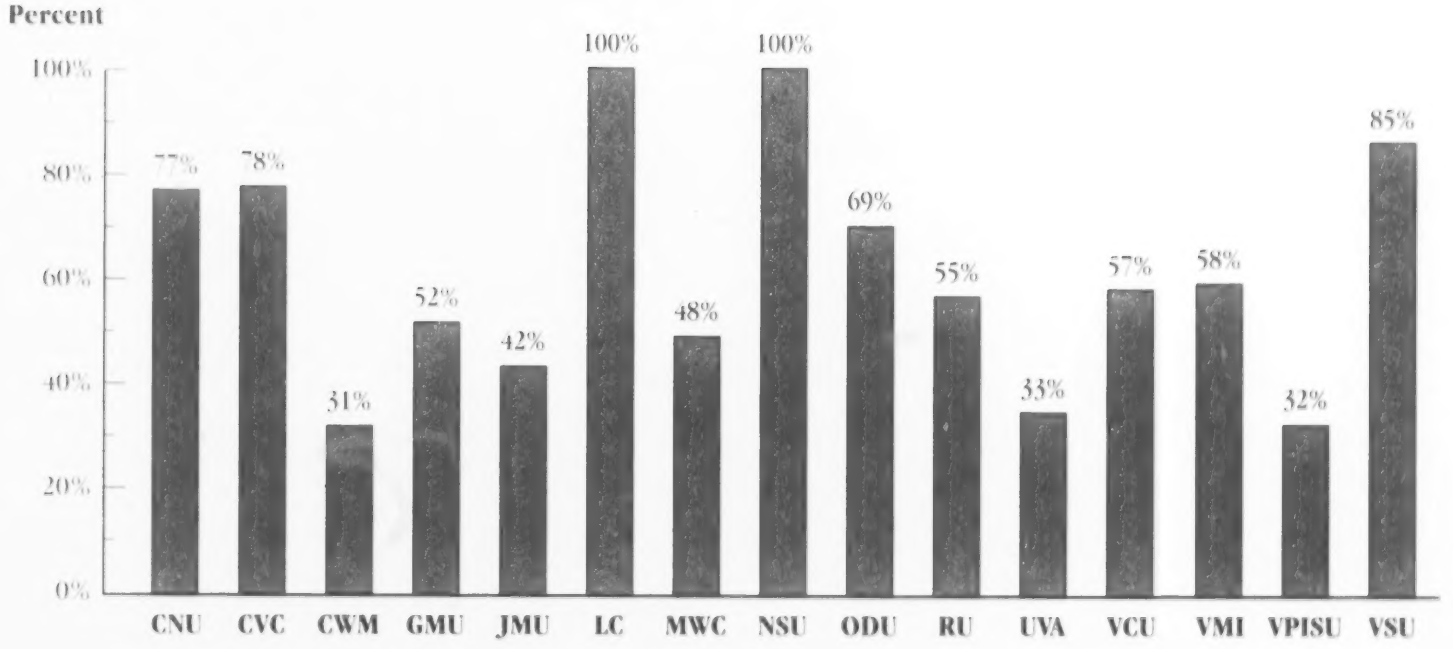
Percentage of Programs Requiring Students to Integrate and Apply Their Knowledge

The following chart shows the percentage of programs at each four-year institution requiring students to integrate and apply their knowledge. This experience may be an internship, a practicum, a "capstone course" that serves as a culmination of the major, a senior project or thesis, or another experience designed to provide students with an opportunity to synthesize what they have learned and often to use this knowledge in the professional world.

The two-year institutions were not asked to supply information on requirements that students integrate and apply their knowledge, but such requirements are a feature of many of their programs.

In many other two- and four-year programs, such experiences are offered but not required. As two examples among many, in the Virginia Community College System students in about half the programs were enrolled in courses that provided an integrative experience, and Old Dominion University guarantees an internship for every student who wants one.

Bachelor's Programs Requiring an Integrative Experience for Completion of Degree



Source: Institutionally Reported, Fall 1996

What questions should a prospective student ask?

The final section of this publication is designed to help students who are trying to decide on a program ask the kinds of questions that will help them make an informed decision. A publication this size cannot answer these questions for every one of the 1300+ programs in the public colleges and universities in Virginia, but admission offices and department or program heads should be prepared to answer them.

Questions to Ask

All students should ask the following:

- What do graduates of this program know? What can they do? How do you know what they know and can do?
- How satisfied are graduates with the education they received? Advising in the major? Course availability?
- What is the reputation of the program, and with whom does it have that reputation?
- What percentage of students who apply are admitted to the program?
- What are the requirements for internal transfer into the program?
- Who teaches the introductory courses? What specific skills will the student who finishes them have?
- What are the program's requirements? What flexibility in taking electives is possible? In what cognate areas do students take courses?
- What are the residency and other enrollment requirements for the degree? How long on average does it take to finish it? How are students informed of their progress toward graduation?
- What financial assistance is available to students?
- Does the program require the purchase of a computer? Train students to use computers, the World-WideWeb, and the Internet? Incorporate computing into learning?
- What resources and facilities are available to students (e.g., library and laboratory resources; study space; career-planning and placement resources; tutoring; counseling; equipment; and access to the Internet, the Web, or mainframe or other computing)?
- What kinds of practical experience — such as internships, co-ops, service learning, or practicums — does the program offer or require? What percentage of students participate?
- What percentage and numbers of majors graduate?
- What percentage of the graduates are employed full-time in jobs related to the program or pursuing further study?
- What percentage of graduates say that the program prepared them well for work and citizenship?
- How satisfied are employers with the program's graduates?
- What is the average starting salary for someone graduating from the program?

Questions to Ask

All students should ask the following:

- Apart from coursework, how much time on average do students spend preparing for comprehensive and qualifying exams and preparing and defending their theses or dissertations?
- What is the function of the comprehensive or qualifying exam?
- Is the thesis or dissertation supposed to be an original piece of research and if so, to what degree and of what scope?
- Can a student use a project initiated at the workplace as a thesis or dissertation topic?
- How much help can students expect from faculty in choosing a topic for and writing the thesis or dissertation?
- What mechanisms are available to students who feel impeded in making reasonable progress with the thesis or dissertation?
- What are the general nature of and time limitations on the commitment to financial support for graduate students?
- Do students have an opportunity to teach? How are graduate teaching assistants and research assistants prepared for and supervised in performing their duties and more generally in preparing to become faculty members, if that is their goal?
- If their goal is to work in business or industry, how are they prepared for that?

For information about specific majors, contact:

Christopher Newport University
50 Shoe Lane
Newport News, VA 23606-2988
http: //www.cnu.edu/
(757) 594-7000

Clinch Valley College of the University of Virginia
One College Avenue
Wise, VA 24293
http://www.clinch.edu/
Toll Free: (800) 468-3412
(540) 328-0102

George Mason University
4400 University Drive
Fairfax, VA 22030-4444
http://www.gmu.edu/
(703) 993-2400

James Madison University
South Main Street
Harrisonburg, VA 22807
http://www.jmu.edu/
(540) 568-3620

Longwood College
201 High Street
Farmville, VA 23909-1898
http://www.lwc.edu/
TOLL FREE: (800) 281-4677
(804) 395-2060

Mary Washington College
1301 College Avenue
Fredericksburg, VA 22401-5358
http://www.mwc.edu/
TOLL FREE: (800) 468-5614
(540) 654-2000

Norfolk State University
2401 Corprew Avenue
Wilson Hall - Suite 340
Norfolk, VA 23504-9998
http://cyclops.nsu.edu/
(757) 683-8396

Old Dominion University
5115 Hampton Boulevard
Norfolk, VA 23529-0015
http://www.odu.edu/
(757) 683-3463

For information about specific majors, contact:

Radford University
P.O. Box 6910
Radford, VA 24142
http://www.runet.edu/
TOLL FREE: (800) 890-4265
(540) 831-5371

University of Virginia
P.O. Box 9011
Charlottesville, VA 22906-9011
http://www.virginia.edu/
(804) 982-3800

Virginia Commonwealth University
910 West Franklin Street
Richmond, VA 23284-3026
http://www.vcu.edu/
TOLL FREE: (800) 841-8638
(804) 828-1222

Virginia Military Institute
Lexington, VA 24450-0304
http://www.vmi.edu/
TOLL FREE: (800) 767-4207

Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University
Blacksburg, VA 24061-0132
http://www.vt.edu/
(540) 231-6000

Virginia State University
P.O. Box 9001
Petersburg, VA 23806
http://www.vsu.edu/
(804) 524-5000

William and Mary, The College of
Williamsburg, VA 23185
http://www.wm.edu/
(757) 221-4000

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